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REMARKS

Responsive to the Official Action mailed June 7, 2004, Applicants provide the following remarks. Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims and Claim Amendments

Applicants note, with appreciation, the allowance of claims 9 and 11-15. Claims 1 and 3-8 have been cancelled without prejudice and not for reasons of patentability. These cancelled claims may be prosecuted in a later-filed continuation application.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections.

In paragraphs 2-5 of the Official Action, claims 1 and 3-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over combinations of Mukasa (U.S. Patent No. 6,084,993), Tanaka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,681,082), Li (T. Li, "The Impact of Optical Amplifiers on Long-Distance Lightwave Telecommunications", Proceedings of the IEEE, Vol. 81, No. 11, November 1993), Tirloni et al. (U.S. Patent App. Pub. 2004/0028359), and Tanaka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,428). Claims 1 and 3-8 have been cancelled, rendering the rejection thereof moot.

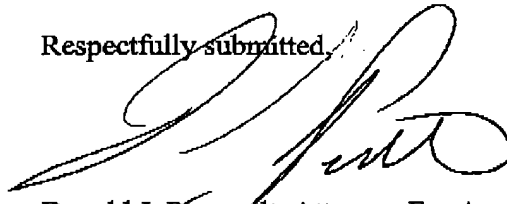
All of the claims remaining in the application have been allowed. Early allowance of the application is earnestly solicited. In the event the Examiner deems personal contact desirable in

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disposition of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney at (603) 668-6560.

In the event there are any fee deficiencies please charge them (or credit any overpayment) to our Deposit Account No. 50-2121.

Respectfully submitted,



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